

THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

Winter 2010

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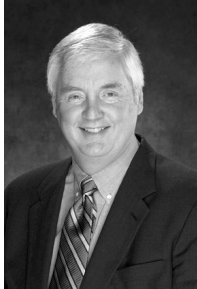


Join Santa at the
Annual Tree Lighting
Ceremony on
Sunday, November 21st
at 5:30 p.m.

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Stability In Difficult Times



Rick Boeshaar
Mayor

With many taxing jurisdictions in Johnson County increasing their real estate mill levy, the end-of-year tax notices may surprise you. Your City Council, however, set its budget priorities around no mill levy increases on the City's portion of your property tax bill. However the City's portion (22 mills) of the total real estate tax bill is less than 20% of the total after also including the state, county, community college, parks district, and school district. Several of these jurisdictions are raising their mill levy, so we are likely to see higher real estate taxes.

You probably know about the challenges that have fallen on all taxing entities as property values and sales and income tax receipts have declined with the recession. Mission Hills has clearly benefited by the efforts of all of us to maintain our property values. We were one of only two municipalities in Johnson County that did not experience a decline in our average property values. We, too, have had declines in other tax receipts, but the responsible fiscal stewardship by your elected officials and city staff over the past decade has reduced expenses and built strong reserves – a good formula for stability during hard times. Mission Hills has remained focused on basic city services with a lean staff, carefully monitored contractors, reasonable payroll increases in good years and small or no increases in lean years.

Our City's website has published updates on the redevelopment, stormwater, and waste disposal issues of our City throughout the year. Primarily because of the recession and the tax increases mentioned above, your City Council has elected to postpone until next year any vote on a possible stormwater utility fee to address our aging and undersized stormwater removal system. In addition to keeping your property tax bills from being even higher than they will be, this will allow us more time for consideration of the structure and amount of these fees. In 2010 and 2011, we expect to be able to complete our capital improvement plan for our streets, including the upgrades needed on the stormwater systems under those streets. However the prospect of continuing to do that is not as optimistic for 2012 and beyond.

I hope you were able to take advantage of the Coffee and Compost event on Saturday, September 25th. The Ad Hoc Committee on Solid Waste Disposal organized this second event after a similar event last April was so positively received. This group, chaired by Jackie Johnson, has sent postcards, letters and brochures regarding efforts you can make now to increase recycling and reduce our impact on the landfill and ultimately on our environment. We are in the midst of "leaf season" when the beautiful trees in our city shed their leaves and we are faced with their cleanup. This may be the final leaf season with no restrictions on placing these leaves in the trash and our landfill. The Ad Hoc

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Mayor's Comments

continued from page 1

Committee and your city leaders have proposed options for you to consider to better dispose of these leaves and other yard waste. See our website updates to review those options.

Your efforts now can have a positive effect on our environment, extend the life of our only county landfill, and therefore help reduce the cost of waste removal in the future.

Mission Hills continues to be a great place to live and raise a family. We are effectively dealing with the issues of our City and planning for a good future. I hope you all enjoyed Halloween and that the upcoming seasonal holidays bring your families together in fun and celebration. ■

Johnson County Passes New Waste Management Rules

On Tuesday, October 5th, the Johnson County Commissioners voted in New Waste Management Rules effective no later than January 1, 2012. By then all contracts with waste haulers must include "Pay As You Throw" provisions to limit trash and encourage recycling. Yard waste must be picked up separately and not sent to the landfill. All of these new rules are in line with what the city and the Waste Management Committee have communicated over the past year. Here are answers to the most commonly asked questions:



Q: What is the effective date of the new regulations?

The new regulations must be implemented no later than January 1, 2012. Several Johnson County cities have already implemented the new regulations. The City of Mission Hills is considering an earlier implementation date than that required by the County, perhaps mid 2011.

Q: What exactly are the changes that will impact residents?

1. Allow for curbside collection of an unlimited quantity of recyclable materials.
2. Set a maximum amount of trash that can be picked up each week, thereby implementing a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system. PAYT means that customers are allowed a certain volume of trash each week. Any trash in excess of the prescribed maximum will cost the customer an additional fee.
3. Since yard waste will be banned from the landfill, it will no longer be comingled with trash. Yard waste will need to be bagged separately (sticks and limbs can still be bundled). In addition to trash and recycling pickups, the City plans to implement a separate curbside collection of yard waste.

Q: What is yard waste?

Yard waste is leaves, grass clippings and tree or bush trimmings. Under the new system, yard waste will need to be placed at the curb for collection in a compostable bag or a rigid container (marked yard waste).

Q: Who will the City's hauler be for these three streams of waste?

The Council has already decided to use Deffenbaugh as the hauler for recycling and trash, as the customer service provided by Deffenbaugh's personnel is unmatched. City Staff will be asking for proposals from haulers interested in providing yard waste pickup in the City. In the coming months the City Council will select a yard waste hauler.

Q: Will the City provide recycling and trash containers for residents (like those used by neighboring cities)?

Yes, once the changes are implemented the City will work with Deffenbaugh to distribute rolling containers to each residence – one for recyclables and one for trash.

Q: What are the next steps?

The City Council has not yet determined the implementation date for the City to adopt the changes required by the County. Be on the lookout for more information from the City on how and when the changes will be implemented. ■



Permits for Electronic Dog Fences

The City is aware that many residents have electronic dog fences that may not meet the City regulation that it be placed at least 15 feet from any street and sidewalk. The Code of Ordinances requires a permit (at no cost) be obtained prior to the installation of the electronic fence. The Code also states there will be a \$50 fee for permits issued after the electronic fence has been installed.

Between now and December 31, 2010, residents may obtain a permit for previously installed electronic fences at no charge. A permit application must be filed at City Hall with a survey or site plan showing the location of the electronic fence. If the fence has been installed within the 15 foot setback area, a permit must be obtained to move the fence so that it meets the City regulation.

Electronic fences illegally placed within 15 foot of a street and sidewalk run the risk of being damaged during City capital projects or utility work. The City will not reimburse residents for repair costs associated with damage to electronic fences that are located within the 15 foot setback area. In addition, illegally placed fences create a dangerous situation for workers and walkers who may have to enter the City's right-of-way because your dog may feel the need to protect this area. By placing the fence completely on your property, the public and your pet will be protected.

Housewatch Program Offered by Prairie Village Police Department

Housewatch is a free program offered to Mission Hills residents by the Prairie Village Police Department.

If you will be leaving your home unattended while out of town, simply contact the Police Department at (913) 642-5151.

You will need to provide contact information and some information about your property to the Police Dispatcher.

This will be forwarded to patrol officers who will then perform random security checks of your residence while you are away.



Winter Will Be Here Before You Know It

With the winter season not far away, please remember the following regarding snow removal:

- Every snow/ice event is unique and the plan for each storm is directly related to the duration and severity of the storm.
- When we have enough warning and it is appropriate, the City streets are pre-treated.
- Plowing will generally begin after 2" of snow has fallen.
- All streets in the City have been prioritized for snow/ice removal. Priority one streets are the arterials and will be cleared first. Arterials include:
 - 63rd Street — Mission Drive — Tomahawk Road — Mission Road
 - Belinder — State Line Road — Indian Lane (Mission Road to 63rd Street)
- The remaining streets and cul-de-sacs will have one lane cleared after the priority streets are completed, and then generally within 8 hours after a 3-4 inch storm has ended these streets should be cleared curb to curb. In the case of heavy snowfall, it can take longer than 8 hours to plow the snow on every street in the City.

We always encourage residents to park their vehicles in the driveway and do not allow vehicles to extend into the roadway. Cars in the roadway slow snow removal operations. Remember, when clearing snow from your driveway, do not place the snow from your driveway back into the street as that is a violation of City ordinance and you will be issued a citation. If you have questions or concerns, please call City Hall at 913-362-9620.

Out on a Limb: Tree Talk

by George L. Eib, City Arborist



George L. Eib

We have had one of the best growing seasons for many years with an abundance of moisture this Spring and Summer through July. We did have a hot July and August with high temperatures that caused leaf scorch on many trees with premature leaf drop on some trees that continued through September. We have had to remove quite a few additional City Maple and Ash trees due to the high temperatures as these trees were still declining from

the Easter freeze we had in the Spring of 2007.

In September, we had low temperatures at night which was good for seeding yards and getting them established after the hot July and August. It is important to keep leaves off newly seeded lawns and continue to mow as grass continues to grow.

I have observed many dead trees on private property - mostly Austrian Pines affected by Diplodia Tip Blight and Scotch Pines affected by Nematode and Ips beetle. Dying and dead Pines should be removed so they will not affect healthy Pines. I am also seeing ivy growing up trunks into the interior of trees and plant material that negatively affect the top growth. Please take action to protect your trees

This year we have experienced an outbreak of Momosa Webworm in Locusts. This will not kill the trees, which should leaf out well next year. If the trees were sprayed in the early part of infestation, the worms would have been killed, and if not, the worms come down and over winter in the ground. If you notice the Webworms next Spring, treat your trees right away.

I have received several calls regarding scale in Magnolias. This is called Magnolia Scale and can be controlled by spraying this Fall and spraying again in the Spring.

If you have questions, I am willing to advise you on City trees or your private trees. You may leave a message for me at City Hall and I will make an appointment to address your concerns. ■

Fall & Winter Checklist

- ✓ Plant spring blooming bulbs. It is important to water spring blooming bulbs that you plant this Fall during dry periods this Winter and into Spring.
- ✓ If you have overhead utility lines from your house to the power pole, now is the time to have those cleared of overhanging limbs to prevent them from falling on the lines during storms. It is not the responsibility of KCP&L to clear those. You will need to hire a private tree company.
- ✓ You should not prune spring flowering shrubs now as they set their buds in the Fall. Wait until after they flower in the Spring for shaping.
- ✓ Keep gutters clear of debris that can cause water to spill or pool. This may cause dams which can back up water under shingles resulting in interior leaks.
- ✓ Please feed the birds and other small creatures during the Winter since they may have trouble finding food.



Three City Council Positions Open for 2011 Spring Election

Three Mission Hills' City Council seats are up for election in April 2011. The City Council meets the second Monday evening of each month. Residents wishing to run for one of the four-year Council terms must file a "Declaration of Intention Filing Form" at City Hall by noon on January 25, 2011. To be eligible to file, individuals must be a United States citizen, 18 years of age and reside in Mission Hills. Residents are required to either pay a \$5 filing fee or file by petition. The petition must have signatures of 10% of the ballots cast in the district at the last general city election or 25 signatures, whichever is less. The Primary Election will be held on March 1, 2011, and the General Election on April 5, 2011. Other candidate documentation needs to be filed after the initial filing deadline. Visit the Johnson County Election Office website at www.jocoelection.org for a list of documents with instructions and filing deadlines.

Holiday Safety Tips

by Matt Boggs, Crime Prevention Officer
Prairie Village Police Department

Mission Hills has had a very successful year for preventing crime. However, now is not the time to let your guard down. With the increased shopping, number of gifts and presents, your home is a target more than ever. Here are some tips for safety during the Holidays.

- Lock your doors and windows at all times. If you can get in without using a key, so can burglars.
- Keep your blinds closed so no one can see the presents in your home.
- Use security lights to help light the outside and warn away intruders.
- When vacationing, hold the newspaper, mail and any other regular deliveries to your home. Set timers on lights, radios, or TVs to give the appearance that someone is home and moving around the residence.
- Do not post your travel plans on social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter.
- Call the police department for a house watch on your residence while you are away.
- Ask a neighbor to make tire tracks in the driveway when it snows to give the appearance someone is home.
- When shopping, do not leave your bag unattended or in the shopping cart, it can be stolen very quickly.
- Pay attention when walking in parking lots, especially when talking on your cell phone.
- Keep valuable items out of sight in your vehicle - put them in the trunk or hidden under a seat. Do not leave any trace of navigation systems like cords, cradles, and ring marks.
- When you take the trash out after the holidays, avoid taking product boxes out to the curb. Leaving a TV, Wii, computer, or laptop box on the curb tells everyone who drives by what there is to steal in your home.

Take the time now to be safety conscious when you are out shopping or around your home - it can save you time, money and hassle. If you have any questions, you can contact Crime Prevention Officer Matt Boggs at 913-385-4613 or e-mail mboggs@pvkansas.com. Please be safe and have a happy holiday season. ■

Safe Driving For Fall Weather

by Sgt. James Carney
Prairie Village Police Department

As we begin the transition from a HOT summer to cooler weather, it is important for drivers to allow a few extra minutes each morning to clear their windows of condensation, ice or snow before driving. The dangers associated with driving a vehicle without a clear view to the front and to the sides can be illustrated by a recent accident involving a car and a bicyclist in Prairie Village. The bicyclist, who had the right of way, was severely injured after being hit by a car whose driver did not see the bicycle approaching the intersection because the car's passenger side windows were obstructed. The driver had not cleaned the passenger side windows of condensation that developed overnight and was unable to see to the right. This accident was entirely preventable and could have had an even more tragic outcome.

Traffic ordinances in Mission Hills require drivers to have a clear view of the street in front, as well as any intersecting street, through the front windshield, side wings, and side windows. So give yourself extra time each morning to defrost or scrape your windows before driving -- you could save a life!



J.R. Hamil Cards Available for Purchase

J.R. Hamil, watercolor artist well known for his Country Club Plaza prints, was commissioned to paint a holiday scene of City Hall. Blank cards have been printed with the holiday scene and are available to purchase at City Hall for \$1 per card/envelope. Call or stop by City Hall to purchase cards before the holidays.



6300 State Line Road
Mission Hills, KS 66208

The Columns is published three
times a year for the residents
of Mission Hills.

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Solicitation Regulations in Mission Hills

City Hall does **not** issue solicitation permits. Solicitation is allowed at residences unless there is a "No Solicitation, Pedaling or Canvassing" decal posted in a visible location. Solicitation may take place between 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (April 1 to August 31) and between 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (September 1 to March 31). It is illegal for solicitors to continue to solicit after being asked by the resident to leave the property. Residents not wanting solicitors can obtain decals that stick to wood or glass at City Hall. If you have a decal posted and a solicitor comes to your home, call Prairie Village Police Dispatch at (913) 642-5151 and the individual will be cited for an ordinance violation. Plastic bags thrown on driveways with rocks and marketing material is considered solicitation and littering. Please call City Hall with the company's phone number and staff will call the company and inform them of the City's solicitation ordinance.

City Calendar *At a Glance*

November 11	Veterans Day CITY HALL CLOSED
November 21	Tree Lighting Ceremony and Santa Arrival at City Hall
November 25-26	Thanksgiving Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
December 24	Christmas Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
December 31	New Year's Eve CITY HALL CLOSED
January 17, 2011	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
January 27, 2011	Joint Homes Association Meeting at Kansas City Country Club